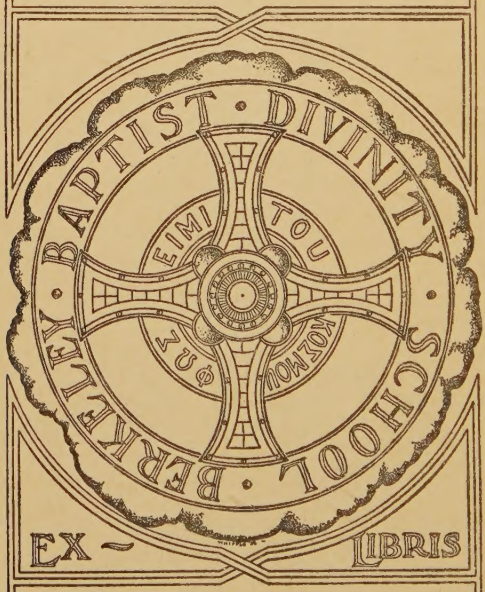
BT
306
.S6
1928
GTU
Storage

CROUCH MEMORIAL
LIBRARY FUND



Accession No. _____

Date _____

THE HALLOWING OF HOME

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

FRANK, BISHOP OF ZANZIBAR

LIFE OF FRANK WESTON, D.D., 1871-1924

7s. 6d. net

EXTRACTS FROM PRESS NOTICES

Fr. WAGGETT writes in *Theology*: "The most vivid personal memory of Frank Weston finds here a revelation. . . . He uplifted, inspired, and guided us as only a man of intense faith and burning love can."

ARTIFEX in the *Manchester Guardian* says: "A great book in every way."

Miss M. C. GOLLOCK writes in the *International Review of Missions*: "An almost incredible book . . . a man who defies definition."

The BISHOP OF MASASI writes in *The East and West*: "This great story of one who dared all."

The Rev. SPENCER H. ELLIOTT in *The Sheffield Daily Telegraph* writes: "I close this book with a strong feeling that before we presume to blacken a man's reputation we should first ascertain whether we are worthy to blacken his boots."

LONDON: S.P.C.K.

THE HALLOWING OF HOME

STUDIES OF OUR LORD'S WORDS SPOKEN TO WOMEN

BY

H. MAYNARD SMITH, D.D.

CANON OF GLOUCESTER; EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOPS OF GLOUCESTER AND ZANZIBAR

LONDON
SOCIETY FOR PROMOTING CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE
NEW YORK AND TORONTO: THE MACMILLAN CO.

FX90
S2u5
LOWELL
LIBRARY

BERKELEY BAPTIST
DIVINITY SCHOOL
LIBRARY

First Published 1928

Made and Printed in Great Britain

BT
306
S6
1928

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	THE ANNUNCIATION	7
II.	THE NATIVITY	14
III.	THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE	24
IV.	IN HIS FATHER'S HOUSE	29
V.	CANA OF GALILEE	36
VI.	THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA	43
VII.	THE CENTURION'S SERVANT	50
VIII.	THE WIDOW OF NAIN	54
IX.	THE WOMAN WHO WAS A SINNER	60
X.	THE WOMAN WITH AN ISSUE OF BLOOD	67
XI.	JAIRUS' DAUGHTER	74
XII.	THE SYROPHENICIAN WOMAN	79
XIII.	MARTHA AND MARY	87
XIV.	THE BLESSING OF CHILDREN	95
XV.	THE RAISING OF LAZARUS	101
XVI.	ZEBEDEE'S CHILDREN	109
XVII.	WOMAN, BEHOLD THY SON	115
XVIII.	ON EASTER MORNING	121

14137

NOTE

SOME of these short papers have already been published in *The G.F.S. Workers' Journal*, and the Author has to thank Mrs. Hensman, the Editor, for leave to republish. In the reconstruction of Biblical situations there is inevitably an element of imagination, but it is not likely to mislead the reader.

8, COLLEGE GREEN,
GLOUCESTER,
All Souls Day, 1927.

THE HALLOWING OF HOME

I

THE ANNUNCIATION

NAZARETH is a little white town on the hillside. It stands at the head of a ravine, which, if you look down it in springtime, you will find deep in wild flowers—masses of bright colour in the sunlight, stirred to a ripple by the breeze. Above and sheltering the town on the north is Mount Tabor, from whence you can see the hills of Samaria far away across the storied plain of Esdraelon. No one can forget Israel's history in the neighbourhood of Nazareth, but the town itself was of no importance in the time of Our Lord. The main road of a great trade route swept round the base of the hill, so that Nazareth was at best a halting-place on a journey. And yet in one of

the little white houses with flat roofs the great announcement was made. In the whole world's history here is the halting-place—we date everything as before or after the year of Our Lord.

Let us consider the story. It is so simple and circumstantial that we feel it must be true. It is so intimate that we feel it can have come from no one but the Holy Mother herself. It is so well known that we sometimes miss its full significance, and that also excuses an attempt to expand the narrative in order to bring out the meaning.

It was noonday, when everything was quiet, and Mary, who was betrothed to Joseph the Carpenter, was apparently alone in the house. Then there came in Gabriel, the Archangel who stands in the presence of God, and he bowed before Mary, saying, *Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women.*

It was noonday, when everything was as usual, and Mary was very wide awake.

She was not apparently in the least afraid of the Angel and does not describe him; but she was troubled by his words, and *cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.*

She was no ecstatic accustomed to see visions: she was not an hysterical person apt to fancy things. She was—the story proves it—very simple, very modest, very good, and therefore incapable of imagining such language about herself. No! It troubled her, could not be meant for her. She shrank from such homage with dread. The Angel, however, encouraged her, saying, *Fear not, Mary.* In calling her *highly favoured*, he was not indulging in the language of inappropriate compliment, he was stating a fact, for *thou hast found favour with God.* Then rapidly he told his news: *Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a Son.* This is the ever wonderful news that has come to myriads of women, but it was necessary that an Archangel should pass from heaven if a pure maiden were to be convinced of

its truth. *And thou shalt call his Name JESUS*—such a common name, borne by hundreds of Jewish children at that time; but it is just in line with God's working that common well-known names and things should suddenly be invested with a significance that was always there, but overlooked and forgotten.

Then the Angel spoke of the future: *He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest : and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David : And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever ; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.* This prophecy, in the literal sense in which Mary must have understood it, has not yet been fulfilled, and only silly people can imagine that it was "made up" after Our Lord had been rejected by the Jews, or even after the Temple had been destroyed, and after Titus had left Jerusalem a heap of stones. Mary listened and remembered and pondered these words in her heart. She did not disbelieve them or question their

meaning. At the time she only thought of how they would come to pass. Quite simply and directly she asks the practical question: *How can these things be, seeing I know not a man?* And the Angel answered, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing that shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.* The faith of Mary did not stagger under the prediction; and we must remember that the words could not mean for her all that they mean for us. *The Son of God* would not for her mean *God the Son.* The mystery of the Incarnation was still not wholly revealed, for Our Lord was to enter fully into the normal conditions of human existence, and be brought up in an ordinary home and submit to parental authority and receive parental protection. But none the less the words were surprising. Hundreds of years had passed and the kingdom of David had perished: in spite of prophecies it had not been revived. Pious Jews,

indeed, believed that the day would come foretold by the prophets; but Mary, the modest maid, had never dreamed that she would be the Mother of the Saviour.

Surprise, however, need not lead to doubt, and the Angel gave her a sign, for which she had not asked, as a confirmation of his prediction. Far away in the hill country of Judea her cousin Elizabeth, in her old age, had conceived, and *it was now the fifth month with her that was called barren*. Let her go and see for herself and so be fortified in her faith, *for with God nothing shall be impossible*.

It was not doubt that was troubling Mary; it was the difficulty of obedience which was in her mind, but she was able to say: *Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word*. All her dreams of a quiet life with Joseph seemed to fade away. She had never known a man, and how malicious tongues would wag about her presumed dishonour! The part assigned her was, no doubt, due to the favour of God, but it seemed to take

her out of the quiet life where she was at home. And yet she consented. When God willed to redeem the world, the Archangel was sent to Mary; and it was through the consent of Mary that the world was redeemed. In the quietness of remote Nazareth the Annunciation was made. The world, full of business, passed along the Way of the Sea, and what happened in Nazareth did not interest. So there came to pass that mystery for proclamation which was wrought in the silence of God.

II

THE NATIVITY

Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. In this verse we have the key to the problem, Whence did St. Luke obtain his facts? He could only have learnt them from the Blessed Virgin, who had through long years brooded over every detail connected with the birth of her Son. She remembered, as mothers will, little facts, not because of their significance, but because they really happened. And St. Luke was an historian in the modern sense; he wanted the facts and was ready to let others interpret them. We can imagine his enquiries: When did it happen? Why did you leave Nazareth so near to the birth of your Child? Why did you come to Bethlehem? Had you no relations in the town? Why did you not go to the Inn? What did you do

with the Child ? Where did you lay Him ? Then he sat down; and without comment, without reflections, and with no attempt at rhetoric, wrote out the facts in the fewest possible words.

But there was a story, not about the birth of Jesus, but about how it was celebrated in heaven and on earth. Mary told him the story of the shepherds, but she could not be cross-examined about that, for obviously she was not on the hillside. She could only bear witness to the fact that the shepherds came and the reason which they gave for coming. Mary did not doubt about their tale, no more need we. St. Luke accepted it on her authority, and translated her story word for word as she told it. That is, he behaved as an historian would to-day if he accepted a strange statement, which he had no means of checking, on the authority of a single witness. Only to-day he would state his authority in a footnote and use inverted commas. Indirectly, he does tell us how he was able to repeat the tale. It

was because *Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.*

Now we need to ponder them also, and find out why it is they have made such an appeal to poets and artists, poor folk and theologians ever since; why it is that the Virginity of Mary and her childbearing are a mystery for proclamation though wrought in the silence of God.

In the first place I want you to notice how it was the decree of Cæsar Augustus which brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, so that without any planning on their parts the old prophecies were confirmed and God's purpose fulfilled. We may speak of the long arm of coincidence, but it is more reasonable to believe in a God Who directs the order of the world. Cæsar Augustus needed statistics of population, and hence the enrolment. Herod carried out the decree in such a way as not to excite the prejudices of the Jews. The desire to prove descent from the Royal House of David brought many to Bethlehem: that was racial pride. Joseph and

Mary had other reasons for obeying the decree. They were glad to leave Nazareth and avoid gossip. Everyone was acting naturally according to their interests; and yet over all, over Cæsar Augustus with his plans for imperial organization and over the poor Carpenter with his domestic perplexities, there was the One God Who ordereth all things. So the Christ was born in accordance with prophetic expectation, and the first of many links was forged that Catholic Christianity should for ever be connected with the preparatory revelation to the Jews.

Secondly, we note the destitution in which Our Lord was born. Away from home and an outcast from the Inn, Mary brought forth her Son in a cave that was used as a stable, and placed Him safe in the crib from which the cattle fed. Yet Mary had made her preparations. She had with her the linen strips to be used as swaddling bands. She had thought of them beforehand, and years afterwards she remembered how she had wrapped Him.

Only a mother, with a mother's love, would have dwelt on such a detail in telling the wonderful story of God Who became Man. And yet it brings home to us, as nothing else could, the condescension involved in the Incarnation. He Who is infinite in power limited Himself to become a baby boy; He Who came to set all men free was content to be bound. It was very Love putting Himself at human mercy and submitting to human care.

People talk to-day a great deal about environment. They speak as if all that mattered for the child were suitable conditions of physical welfare. It is well sometimes to remember that the perfect life of the perfect man began in a stable. To ensure physical well-being is a good thing, but there is something even more important—to be born into a real family and to have a holy mother. Mary the Virgin conceived and gave birth to a Son, but when the Son was born Mary was the legal wife of St. Joseph, "a just man." He was probably a widower with a grown-

up family. So Our Lord entered on a life of many relationships. He grew up in a home. The family and the home, these are of account in God's eyes, of more account than riches and comfort, or than all the organizations which science or charity can provide.

The birth of any little child fills a mother with hope, and this little Child is the hope of the world, but very few heeded His advent. The strangers in Bethlehem were disputing for lodgings, bargaining for food, boasting their pedigrees, wondering if the census would lead to taxation, and trying to estimate what Cæsar Augustus would demand. How could they be interested in the unknown woman out in the stable who had given birth to a Child? It was no business of theirs. The Mother was poor, and the Child was of no account.

But away on the bleak hillside there were a few shepherds, probably sitting beside a fire of thorns and protected from the wind by two or three hurdles. They were watching their sheep, ready to protect them

from wild beasts, thinking of lambing time, and how in the spring they would take the lambs to Jerusalem for the Temple sacrifices. They knew nothing as yet of the Lamb of God, Who taketh away the sins of the world.

They were probably quiet, rather silent men who lived much alone, and no doubt also the glib, sharp-witted townsfolk would have told you that they were very superstitious.

Sailors, who watch of nights while the stars shine on a waste of moving waters, shepherds, passing long hours on open downs with never a soul in sight, may be very ignorant, but they have time to think and cultivate a gift for observation. They get nearer to the elemental things, the ultimate realities, and are more impressionable by spiritual influences which may be good or evil. At any rate, these shepherds were sufficiently receptive to perceive the presence of a herald Angel, and had a power of attention which enabled them to hear his message. And this in spite

of the natural fear occasioned by the glory which surrounded his presence.

And the Angel said unto them, Fear not : for behold I bring unto you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord. But the Angel did not simply make the announcement, he wanted them to verify the fact. Spiritual impressions may be false, and we are taught to try the spirits whether they be of God. So the Angel went on—*And this shall be a sign unto you : Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.*

Then suddenly, as they looked up into the night of stars, they saw Angels instead, and it was as in the beginning when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy. The earth might be undisturbed, the heaven was jubilant. The messengers of God proclaimed the glory of a Baby and the armies of God welcomed peace.

The vision faded, but the shepherds were

not mere visionaries. They were practical men. They said, *Let us go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.* They hastened to His cradle and were not scandalized by the meanness of the surroundings. Heaven and earth had come very near, and poverty had been consecrated for all time. Did they come in one by one very shyly and find it very hard to explain their coming? Did they kneel in adoration, or did they stand awkwardly gazing at the Child? It does not matter. They were convinced and went away satisfied.

They went away, but not to keep the secret to themselves. Having seen Our Lord, they wanted to make Him known. These first poor missionaries of the Child of Bethlehem were not treated with derision. People wondered at the tale, perhaps they talked about it, but they did not go to see for themselves. They feared to be convicted of overmuch credulity.

Then the shepherds returned to their

flocks and the humdrum duties of life. As far as their outward condition was concerned, nothing was changed; but their hearts were thrilled with joy and thanksgiving. The world could never again be for them a dark, meaningless place; it was very near to heaven—the bright and morning star had risen. He Who was the root and offspring of David had come.

We may imagine that for weeks after when they could get away from their sheep they returned to Bethlehem to gaze on the Child and talk to the Holy Mother. Slowly, and by degrees, and with many digressions, from their rustic lips she heard again and again the story of the Angels: *And Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.*

III

THE PRESENTATION IN THE TEMPLE

THE fortieth day was fixed for the purification of women after childbirth, but for Mary the Virgin there was no need of purification. A woman's first-born son, according to the Law, had to be redeemed; but the Saviour of the world was in no need of redemption. Mary, however, claimed no privilege for herself or her Child. She rejoiced to fulfil the Law; and He came, the perfect pattern, to fulfil all righteousness.

She brought indeed the offering of the poor, but God values an offering, not for what it costs in the market, but what it costs to the giver. With the offering she brought her Child that she might present him to God. She was the good Mother who recognized God's claims, and she knew that only through God's help could she care for Him aright.

Daily, mothers went up the Temple steps, joyfully carrying their little ones: it was for them a festival of rejoicing, but far too common to excite remark. On this occasion there were no troops of congratulating friends, no bright clothes, not even a lamb—though the Lamb of God at length had come—just a poor woman with a baby in her arms, and beside her an elderly man, her husband. Such a pair would well pass unnoticed.

But there was in the Temple that day an old man who had come there, moved by an impulse he could not resist—an old man, who really believed in the Messiah Who had been foretold—an old man to whom God had granted an inward conviction that he should live to see the consolation of Israel. There were such people, most of them probably poor and obscure, existing in the Jerusalem of Herod. His name was Simeon. He obeyed the impulse, and he was not disappointed. He saw the Mother. He took the Child into his own arms. The desire of his heart was more than fulfilled, and he recited

the *Nunc Dimittis*. Through all the evil days he had continued to hope, and the hope of the world had come. He looked into a Baby's face, and the light of the world beamed upon him. He had prayed so earnestly for deliverance, and the Saviour was safe in his arms. He wanted nothing else, he was ready to die, for in his rapt vision he saw the light that was to be the revelation to the Gentiles. He rejoiced that, whether men recognized it or not, the glory of Israel was apparent.

Did anyone pause to listen to him? I expect very few. Those who did listen would not understand, for they did not share his standpoint. Only the Holy Mother and St. Joseph *marvelled at these things which were spoken of them*. Why, you may ask, should they marvel when they had received the Angel messages and heard the story of the shepherds? Mary may have been positive about the Annunciation, but plenty of people would have told her that she had imagined it. Joseph had to confess that his knowledge had

come to him in sleep. It was possible that the shepherds under a night of stars had thought they saw more than was there. Meantime the ordinary routine of life went on, with its constant pressure on the mind. And now, once again, here in the Temple an unknown man rhapsodizes over the Child. Here was a stranger who knew their secret—the secret they hardly liked to mention to one another—the secret they kept and pondered in their hearts. At first he thinks only of the Child. Then they in their amazement attract him. He turns and looks on them, blesses them, and is filled with a great pity for the Mother. He says, *Behold this Child is set for the down-fall and rising again of many in Israel : and for a sign which shall be spoken against.* He has read the prophets, and He knows the Jerusalem of Herod. He has the Hebrew conception of righteousness, and he knows that such righteousness can only be established in the face of opposition. He has some conception of the fact that salvation will only come through suffering,

and, looking at the young Mother, he knows that *the sword will pierce through her own soul also.* How could it be otherwise? The revelation had come, the glory would be manifest, but that revelation would be more than the revelation of the Messiah, it would be the revelation of men—the thoughts of many hearts would be revealed. It is not what a man professes about goodness that reveals him, but what are his relations with the good man when he meets him. The Angel, looking on the Incarnation from the standpoint of heaven, sees the ultimate salvation of men and speaks of joy. Simeon, looking on the same mystery from the standpoint of the earth and sinners, speaks of sorrow and suffering. Both were right; but one looked to the process in time and the other to the result in eternity. Anna, though a prophetess, did not see so far. She rested in the present fact and wanted to make Him known. But Joseph and Mary were humble folk; they did not court publicity, but went out of the Temple.

IV

IN HIS FATHER'S HOUSE

It was the custom of pious people to go up to Jerusalem for the Feasts, for it was only in Jerusalem that the worship of God could be properly celebrated. There alone were the Altar and the Sacrifices. Synagogues were more like mission-halls, and were used as clubs. Bible-classes and discussions took place in them on the Sabbath, and during the week children were taught in them reading, writing, and religion.

We can think of Mary and Joseph and their Son travelling for safety with their kinsfolk and acquaintance from Nazareth up to Jerusalem, a journey of some seventy miles. Their provisions, cooking utensils, and tents would be packed on donkeys, and they probably did not walk more than ten or twelve miles a day. As they went

they sang from time to time the Songs of Degrees (Ps. cxx.-cxxxiv.); and when at last they reached the top of the Mount of Olives, and saw the city of palaces in all its beauty, they sang the Hallel Psalms (cxiv.-cxviii.), which were proper for the Passover.

It must have been a very happy time for the Lord Jesus. He had probably not been in Jerusalem since He was presented in the Temple as a baby. He was now twelve years old, and at twelve a boy might become a Son of the Law, by a ceremony answering to our Confirmation. That entitled him to go not only into the Court of the Gentiles and the Court of the Women, but also into the Court of the Israelites in the Temple; and perhaps Mary had brought Him up to the Passover that He might enter into His full privileges as one of the people of God.

The Feast was also a time of much jollity. People came to it not only for the sacrifices but also to enjoy themselves. There were sightseers from all over the world, in every sort of dress, speaking every

sort of language. Perhaps many were there only because it was a holiday, and hardly thought of how the holiday was ordained because of the great deliverance, when God brought His people out of Egypt by a mighty hand. Just so there are people to-day who think more about plum-puddings at Christmas than about the manger at Bethlehem and Mary's little Boy.

Most of the people had to live in tents, for the numbers were so great that there was no room for all of them within the city, but each morning they crowded up to the vast Temple area. There was much buying and selling in the Court of the Gentiles, and many changers of money. The Sacrifices were offered with much ritual pomp, and the buildings were of great magnificence. The Feast lasted eight days, and then there was a great packing-up, and the various caravans started on their way home. We do not know how Our Lord came to be left behind, but we may be sure that it was not through His

fault. We can quite understand how Mary and Joseph believed He was in the company, for the boys of the party would race on before, while their elders walked beside the asses. It was not until the camp was pitched for the night that they were anxious. Then the boys sought their own firesides, eager for food, but no Jesus came to Mary and Joseph. Anxiously they went from fire to fire; He was not there. They questioned His companions, and none of them had seen Him all the day. Terrible must have been the shock when they knew that He was lost. Why had they taken so much for granted?

No doubt they were tired after the long day's walk, but all through the night they were hurrying back to Jerusalem, full of fear. The city was full of strangers, and kidnapping was not unknown. A healthy boy of twelve would fetch twenty pieces of silver, and the purchaser would not be likely to ask questions.

And where was Jesus? Finding Himself left behind, He had gone into the

Temple, where the great Rabbis sat by the pillars and disciples sat at their feet. There was no regular instruction. Those who wanted to learn asked questions, and the Rabbi perhaps answered by another question. Our Lord was there to learn. This should not surprise us; neither was the learning unreal. He was God in manhood, but just as He grew from babyhood to man's estate and was sustained by food, so His human mind expanded and was fed with facts and experience. He had been perfect as a baby, and He was now a perfect boy, with all a boy's eagerness to learn and to answer about what He knew. Soon He was the centre of a crowd marvelling at His intelligence. He had the keenness and the simplicity of a lovable child.

It was in the Temple that Mary and Joseph found Him, and it seems strange, and it was strange to Him, that it was the last place where they sought Him. Mary pushed through the little crowd. Her words are quite natural: "Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? Behold Thy

father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." And He answered, "How is it that ye sought Me? Wist ye not that I must be in My Father's house?"

This is the better translation, though "about My Father's business" is admissible. The surprise of Our Lord is not that His Mother should seek for Him, but that she should not have known where to look. How had they wasted their time when they should have known that He would go to His Father's house? In emphasizing this He reminds His Mother that Joseph was not really His father. God alone is His Father; and His true home is His Father's house.

Our Lord, the perfect boy growing in wisdom, was none the less conscious of Himself. He knew Who He was and the work for which He must prepare Himself, and this is brought out by the old and quite legitimate translation.

But the story does not end there. Many a boy would not have liked to be taken away by his mother just at the moment when he

was an object of admiration to other boys and was being praised by strangers. There was, however, no such spirit of unruly pride in the Lord Jesus. He was really humble and obedient, obedient to His Father in heaven, and obedient to the Mother who bore Him. He went down to Nazareth, we are told, and was subject unto them. It is all so simple and natural. Our Lord came to teach us that God is our Father, and He founded His religion in the quiet and intimate sanctities of a home.

V

CANA OF GALILEE

THE words, *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* sound as if they were rude; but we cannot think of Our Blessed Lord being rude to anyone, and least of all to His Mother. So the words require interpretation, and we have to understand the situation aright.

There was a marriage feast at Cana of Galilee, and it took place in the bridegroom's house when he brought home his bride. It was, however, the bridegroom's friend who presided and was the governor of the feast. He was an important personage at Eastern weddings and also before they took place, for he often acted as intermediary in the courtship. Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was evidently the friend of the family, for she knew how much wine had been provided, she knew the

servants, and she was evidently concerned for the success of the entertainment.

It was probably for her sake that Our Lord was asked to the wedding when he came unexpectedly out of Judea, and His three or four disciples were included in the invitation, because the bridegroom was hospitable, and did not consider the difference that four or five more guests might make.

The bridegroom, we can imagine, was neither rich nor poor. He had, perhaps, been saving against his wedding, and certainly did not give feasts every day. He reckoned that he had provided enough food and wine, so that his neighbours and friends might speak of his lavish hospitality; but he could not afford to be careless in his expenditure, and he had not allowed sufficiently for extra guests. The feast was a success, and everyone was happy. How could they be otherwise when Jesus was there? All the guests had compliments for the bride and bridegroom, and the governor, we may imagine, was in his

element, welcoming guests, and urging them to eat, drink, and be merry. But when people are happy, they forget time. When people are happy, they do not want to go away. Still the servants were filling the cups, and it was only Mary who knew that they had come to the last wine-skin. It was then that she whispered in her Son's ear, " They have no wine." What did she mean? She was hinting to Him that it was time to go. If only He would rise and say good-bye, the other guests would follow suit. The party would come to a successful end, and all would be well. It was then that Our Lord answered: *Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.*

What did He mean? *Woman* is of course not rude. The word so translated was a title of respect, more like our *Madam*. The Greek goes on *What to me and to thee*, and the translators have supposed it to mean *What have we in common?* But may it not mean *What is that to me and thee?* and if we so understand it, all is

plain. Mary said to her Son: *They have no wine*, meaning "It is time to go." He replied: "What have we to do with that? I am not going yet." And Mary knew her Son. She knew He had never been unkind, careless, or thoughtless when others were concerned. She probably had a thousand recollections of how He had put things right. He had never hitherto wrought a miracle. She had no reason to expect one. But when the servants looked to her with the evidence of the empty wine-skin, she would only point to Jesus, saying, "He knows all about it; do what He tells you."

And there were six water-pots or troughs for water lying by the door which had been used for the guests, when they took off their sandals, to wash their feet before they went to recline on the divans round the wall. Our Lord told the servants to fill them, and then draw off some of the water and carry it to the governor of the feast. They did so, and lo! the water had become wine.

The bridegroom's friend was perplexed.

He knew about wine, and such wine as this he had never tasted. Why, he asked the bridegroom, had it not been served before? He had experience of feasts, and he knew the ordinary procedure. Cynically he tells us: *Every man setteth on first the good wine, and when men have drunk freely, then that which is worse; thou hast kept the good wine until now.*

The revelry continued, the feast was a success, a happy memory for bride and bridegroom; and it was all due to the fact that Jesus was there, that He had been called to the wedding.

We are so accustomed to think of Our Lord as the Man of Sorrows, that we are apt to forget Him in our moments of joy. We remember how He called on some to forsake all, but we forget how He lived for thirty years in a quiet home and consecrated matrimony at Cana of Galilee. He had come into the world to redeem and sanctify the whole of life. He is ready now to share our pleasures as well as our pains; and we should be happier if we

thought of Him as *God with us* quite as much in the days of laughter as in the days of tears. Our Lord was no sour-faced Puritan. He wanted and He wants men to be happy. He has given us all things in their season richly to enjoy.

Again, from this story we learn that Our Lord came into the world not merely to teach us morals but manners also. Many people would have liked to show their benevolence by bestowing wine when it was lacking. Then all the guests would have said, "How kind of Him!" while the bride and bridegroom were miserable and ashamed. Our Lord gave and it was not known. Even the bridegroom at the time did not know. His was a joyous feast and nothing was lacking. It was a true fact which prompted our Lady's suggestion; but it was still better that a happy party should not be broken up. She would have saved the face of the bride and bridegroom; He did better, and established their repute. Perhaps people may think that the whole incident is

beneath the level of One who came into the world to reveal God, that He should work a miracle, and that His first, because of the susceptibilities of an unknown bride and bridegroom; but Our Lord came into the world to reveal God as love, and the lover cares for details, and proves his love by a sensitive regard for the feelings of the loved one.

One last point may also be noted. The wine given by Our Lord was the best, and it came last. The pleasures of the world are very alluring, but they do not endure, and only end in exhaustion. Our Lord offers no such pleasures to His disciples. In following Him we often fear disaster and disgrace, and sometimes think that the best thing to be done is to give up and go away. Like Mary we have to wait His hour, like the servants we have to obey His voice, and then, like the governor, we may end with wonder, for He gives more than we desire or deserve.

VI

THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA

Our Blessed Lord sat by the well of Sychar. He was very tired and thirsty, and His disciples had gone into the town in order to buy food. Then there came a woman to draw water, and He asked her for a drink; but she was a Samaritan, and somewhat ungraciously reminded Him that *the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans*. I do not suppose that she meant to refuse His request, but she could not resist the temptation to score a point. We often spoil our good works by our bad manners.

Our Lord did not resent her remark, but went on to speak of the Living Water which He alone could give. This puzzled the woman, but after irrelevant objections she asked, *Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.*

The woman was literal-minded, but she was logical. It would be of little advantage if she did not thirst herself, but still had to come and draw water for others. She might be fickle and self-indulgent, but she recognized that she belonged to a world of social duties; and Our Lord responded at once to her implied thought, by telling her to call her husband.

Here we may imagine a pause, and then the woman said apologetically, or perhaps with a defiant toss of the head, *I have no husband*. She received a second shock in finding that the Jewish stranger knew already the intimate secrets of her evil life.

Quite naturally she wished to change the conversation to a theme which was less personal. We are all ready to discuss anything rather than our sins, and will quarrel violently about a question of ritual, when we cannot open our mouths on what really concerns the salvation of our souls. So this woman said, *I perceive you are a Prophet*, and went on to ask hurriedly which was right, the Jew or the Samaritan,

and where ought God to be worshipped—in the Temple or on Mount Gerizim ?

Our Lord was very patient with the woman and followed her lead. He told her that *salvation was of the Jews*, but that the time was coming when the Father should be worshipped everywhere, for *God is a Spirit ; and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.*

Once again the woman did not understand, but she was not going to own as much. She thought to close the conversation by saying, *Well, I suppose we shall know what is right when Messias cometh, for He will tell us all things.*

Very quietly the stranger answers, *I that speak unto thee am He.*

It was one of the most dramatic moments in history !

We need not pursue the story further, though we should remember that the woman was at length convinced, converted, and became a missionary in her own neighbourhood. What I want you to note is that, throughout the whole con-

versation, Our Lord was attempting to draw the woman away from material things to spiritual, and from conventional but unmeaning phrases to the truth. Here was a woman only concerned with her daily work of drawing water from the well, and she had to be convinced that she had a thirsty soul which wanted to be satisfied. Here was a woman who had only thought of marriage as a means of satisfying her carnal lusts, and she had to learn the social obligations and the spiritual meaning of a home. Here was a woman whose religion was concerned with a superstitious observance of particular places, made to think of the Person who was worshipped in them. Here was a woman who was content to postpone the knowledge of the Truth until doomsday, suddenly made aware that she was in the presence of the personal Truth, and must accept or reject Him. And the whole of this teaching is surely summed up in the words: *God is a Spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.*

When we say that *God is a Spirit* we admit that spirit is the ultimate reality. Therefore there can be no true explanation of the world which is not spiritual. The world of appearances is only rightly understood when we find in it a revelation of God. This is what St Paul meant when he said, "The invisible things of Him from the foundation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." The world is a great sacrament for communion with God—to reveal Him to the reverent and veil Him from the profane. But in saying this we are bound to admit that we also are spirits, or no such communion would be possible. Being spiritual we have spiritual needs requiring a satisfaction which we cannot receive through the senses. The woman by the well had sought for satisfaction and not found it. She had divorced husband after husband or been divorced, and was living outside any recognized bond; and so long as she only regarded the world as a place for satisfying her thirst, her passions, or

her racial pride, she was bound to be discontented. But she was still a spiritual being, for she recognized a social obligation of working for others, and she could be awakened to a sense of shame; she could in consequence be won to worship God in spirit and in truth, and *the Father was seeking such to worship Him.*

But how can God be worshipped in spirit and in truth? The spirit can only express itself by material means, and usually we can only know spirit through matter. Our Lord was not in consequence forbidding any form of ceremonial or service; but He was emphasizing the point that no form was of any value except as an expression of the spirit. It is not by formal acts, it is not even through the emotions, but it is through acts of will that we cling to God and remain in communion with Him.

And that our worship may be worthy of Him, it is necessary that we should know the truth about Him. It is because God has been so wrongly known that such

terrible deeds have often been done in the name of religion. Some people seem to think lightly of truth. They think that the character of God is a matter of opinion, and that we are free to accept so much of His Revelation and Law as appeals to ourselves. They are content to go on with hazy notions, and escape from thought by saying, " No one will know until doomsday—*till Messias cometh*." But the Christian believes that God has come, that He has limited Himself to human conditions that we might understand His relations with ourselves. The Word has been made flesh, the Truth has been manifested, and if we would worship in truth, it must be through Him who announced to the woman at Sychar, *I that speak unto thee am He*.

VII

THE CENTURION'S SERVANT

THE centurion was a Roman soldier, but he was probably in the service of Herod Antipas. Unlike most of his class, he sympathized with the natives among whom he lived and was interested in their religious beliefs; he had even built them a synagogue. Still more unlike most of his class, he did not regard his slave as a chattel, but as one who was dear unto him. When that slave was very ill, he did not grumble about the inconvenience to himself, or think of the pecuniary loss he would suffer from his death; he thought only of his slave's welfare and how he might be healed. On his behalf he was even ready to stoop and ask a favour; and so a deputation of his friends came to Jesus with his request. He did not come himself, for he knew how heathen were regarded by Rabbis, and

he knew how Rabbis would be quick to resent anything that might be interpreted as a centurion's command.

Our Lord's answer was prompt—*I will come and heal him*; and no doubt the Jewish friends hastened back with the news that the Master had sent no directions, but was coming Himself. This the centurion thought was awkward. He knew that no Jew could enter his house without being polluted, he knew how closely Our Lord's actions were being watched and canvassed at Capernaum. He, a soldier and a man of discipline, did not wish Our Lord to transgress His racial rules for him. He had consideration for Our Lord's repute, and the tact not to suggest it. He sent a message: *Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof, but speak the word only and my servant shall be healed.* The centurion had never heard about modern theories of faith healing; to him, the soldier, Our Lord was the man with the right to command. He explained: I am a man under authority. I obey orders.

I am also within limits an authority. I say *unto this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it.* I don't have to go with them. (He was thinking that all diseases were caused by evil spirits, and he thought of Our Lord as having authority over them. There was no reason for His presence, He had only to speak and they would obey.)

A modern educated prelate might have been shocked at such ignorance and have contented himself with some contemptuous words on heathen superstition. But Our Lord was not much concerned with the man's ignorance of science, He divined a great, loving heart in need—a man who cared for his slave: He noted a beautiful humility and courtesy in the message that had been sent Him: He applauded the man's faith, saying, *I have not found such great faith, no, not in Israel.* And that faith was justified: the servant was well once more.

Here was a Roman who had risen superior to race prejudice and social status, who

had been willing to humble himself for the sake of a slave. And here was Our Lord trying to convert His own people from narrow nationalism and fanaticism. He cared for the centurion and his slave. In caring for them and in consequence of the centurion's faith, He makes His announcement: *Many shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the children shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

VIII

THE WIDOW OF NAIN

In the springtime Our Lord set out from Capernaum with His disciples, and a great crowd followed Him, some from curiosity and some to learn. It was a good day's walk to Nain. Perched on the side of the Little Hermon, the town could only be approached by one steep road. As Our Lord, followed by a crowd, climbed up the narrow way, another crowd came out of the gate, going to the cemetery below the town. Coming up the road was the Lord of Life with an enthusiastic following. Going down the road was a broken-hearted widow, weeping for her only son. Behind her came friends, professional mourners wailing miserably, and probably also musicians making a barbarous clanging. Last of all came an open bier with the corpse bound in his grave clothes.

As the crowds met, a pause was inevitable —the way was blocked. The wailing ceased and there was a hush. Someone was standing by the bereaved widow. He looked at her, and in a voice of deep compassion said, *Weep not*. Who, asked the people of Nain, was this stranger who spoke so kindly and with such quiet assurance? They were surprised that a stranger should so instantly associate Himself with the woman's grief. But He did more: He advanced towards the bier, all making way for Him. He placed His hand upon it as one having authority, and the astonished bearers stood still. No ordinary Jew would think of coming into unnecessary contact with a dead body, for by the Law it involved defilement. Then He spoke: *Young man, I say unto thee, Arise*. And the young man sat up, and began to speak, perhaps to ask why he was there and what everyone was doing. Then Jesus turned and gave him to his mother. It was she who wanted him, and for her the miracle had been performed. They were enough

for one another, and we may conclude that they only wished to be out of the crowd.

The crowd probably let them go through them. They were awed by the miracle. Then came a fear on them all. Some glorified God; some whispered, "A great Prophet is risen up among us." Some exclaimed, "God hath visited His people." The news spread rapidly; it penetrated far away, even to the prison of John the Baptist. It made him wonder whether his own deliverance and a triumph for all his hopes were at hand.

The talk, the amazement, the speculation were all quite natural at the time—just what we should expect; but now we dwell chiefly on the story as illustrating Our Lord's compassion. He did not travel through the country to do works at which men might marvel; but virtue went forth from Him, because He had a heart to feel for others and a will to serve them. Love quickens life, and in Him life was irresistible in power.

Our Lord had for long been in willing

subjection to His Mother. For thirty out of His three-and-thirty years He had lived with her. He was to remember and to provide for her in His last agony. He never forgot His Mother. So He recognized, sympathized with, and consecrated mothers' love—the most beautiful and purest love in the world. It was to the widow of Nain, and not to the dead boy, that He first went. It was for her He had compassion, for did He not know that it was well with the dead? It was for her sake that the boy was brought back to earthly life. She could not live without him. She was a widow, and he her only son.

We have all stood by some mourner and said *Don't cry*, feeling all the time that it was good for them to cry and find a vent for sorrow. The words came to us quite naturally none the less. By them we expressed our sympathy. We did really wish the mourner had no reason for grief. Our Lord, who wept by the grave of Lazarus, does not forbid weeping. He can, how-

ever, do more than condole, He can strengthen. When He says *Weep not*, it is because He can remove the cause of weeping. He asks us to trust Him and have faith, before He turns our weeping into joy.

The Greek word translated *young man* is a diminutive and belongs to the language of affection. It means much what a father means when he calls his son *little man*. Our Lord's address should be noted and also the emphatic *I*. He spoke as one having authority. He acted in His own Name. It is because *I say it* the command must be obeyed—*Arise !*

Lastly, *He delivered him to his mother*. The words had a different significance for the mother and the son. She who had lost her son received him again from Jesus as a sacred trust. He who had returned to life and vigour felt himself consigned to his mother. He was to feel henceforth that he belonged to her, and not she to him. Many parents have still to learn that children are God's gift, delivered to

them by the All-Father as a sacred trust. Many children to-day need to be taught that parents do not merely exist for their convenience, but that they belong to their parents according to the Will of God.

IX

THE WOMAN WHO WAS A SINNER

MANY have thought that the incident of the Woman and the Alabaster Box is misplaced by St. Luke, that this story is merely his version of the story told by the other evangelists about what happened at Bethany in Holy Week. It is quite possible, however, for a woman who has once done something and been commended for it to do the same thing again. Personally, I incline to believe that St. Luke is correct in describing the first incident as happening at Simon's house in Galilee, and that St. John is correct in describing the second incident as happening at the house of Lazarus in Bethany. SS. Matthew and Mark would only be incorrect if Simon the Leper and Lazarus were different people. When there are two similar stories there is always a chance of confusing the names.

The woman in all the other accounts is named Mary, and I am inclined to identify Mary Magdalene with Mary of Bethany, and to believe that she twice anointed Our Lord's feet. But all these are very disputable positions, and different people will calculate the probabilities differently. We will confine our attention to the narrative given by St. Luke.

The people of Galilee were still disputing if Our Lord were a prophet or the expected Messiah; but He was generally received as a Rabbi, and as a Rabbi He was entitled to hospitality. Simon the Pharisee, in inviting Our Lord to his house, recognized the duty of entertaining a Rabbi, but he did not approve of Our Lord's teaching, and was not going to put himself about or even to be gracious in his hospitality. He gave Him no welcoming kiss, his servants did not wash His feet, and he was certainly not going to anoint His head with precious ointment. The meal was served probably in a room which was open to the street but raised a few feet above it. The guests,

having taken off their sandals, reclined on couches. The host faced the street; Our Lord faced him. His feet therefore could be touched by anyone passing by; a woman might kiss them without kneeling down or without intruding into the room.

There was a woman in the city who was a sinner. She was not a poor woman, for she had one of those alabaster boxes in which the precious unguents of Damascus were sold. Her life may have been evil, but she had no false shame. There in the public street she stood weeping. The tears fell on Our Lord's feet; she stooped to wipe them with her long hair, and then she poured over them the ointment which might easily be worth more than ten pounds of our money.

All the time Simon was watching. All the time he was saying to himself: " Prophets know about people, and if this man were really a prophet He would know about this woman. If He were even a good man He would not allow Himself to be defiled by contact with any chance

woman." It was while he was thus thinking that Our Lord turned and proved to him that He was a prophet who had read his thoughts, and proved to him also that He knew all about the woman and her needs. He told him the Parable of the Two Debtors, asked for his judgment upon them, and then convicted him out of his own mouth.

What a difference there was between Simon, proud of his own righteousness, and the woman weeping for her sins! Simon felt no need of the Lord; it was the woman who looked to Him for salvation. He was fulfilling an unpleasant duty in entertaining Our Lord to supper. She was lavishing upon Him the evidence of her love.

We are not told how the woman had become a sinner. Our Lord only says, *She loved much*. She had probably loved someone unworthy of her and been by him betrayed. That was, she felt, no excuse, or she would not have been weeping at His feet. He had made her conscious of her sin. In throwing herself away on

one who was unworthy, she had herself become unworthy of one who was good. But Our Lord was more ready to forgive the errors of love than the wickedness of pride, and He turned to the heart-broken sinner to say, *Thy sins are forgiven*. Simon and his friends were astonished by this claim to forgive, but Our Lord no longer concerned Himself with them. He said to the woman, *Thy faith hath saved thee ; go in peace*.

Now, in thinking about this story, I want you to remember something about repentance and something about faith, and the relation of one to the other.

A great many people are sorry that they have done wrong things, because they either injure their reputation in the world or, what is worse, destroy their own self-respect; but such sorrow does not necessarily lead to repentance. As long as we only think of ourselves we cannot repent. Had this woman only thought of herself, she would have hid herself and never come to the feet of the Saviour. It must have

been hard for her in any case to make such public acknowledgment of her need for pardon, especially before the cold stare of Simon, with whom she had probably been acquainted in the days of her innocence.

True repentance only begins when we think of another rather than of ourselves, when we are sorry that we have hurt another, offended another, made communion with another an impossibility. That is why confession of some sort is the necessary outcome of any real repentance. When the woman grasped what Jesus was in His purity and His love, she realized her sin and vileness. She had loved much, and her love had led her into sin. She now knew a purer love, and again she would surrender herself wholly; but, alas! was it not too late? At least, she is not ashamed of her sorrow or her tears. She dares only to kiss His feet, but her presence as a penitent is her complete confession.

But why, then, did Our Lord say that she was saved by faith? Because it was faith in His holiness that brought about

her repentance. The Christian conception of faith always implies relationship to a person and trust in him. We cannot repent of our sins so long as we think of God in abstract terms; repentance only becomes possible when we know Him as a person who is grieved or has been outraged by our conduct. The woman had found in Jesus one who was really grieved by her way of life, one who stood for those virtues which she had disregarded. She believed sufficiently in Him to adopt His standard of values. She was on His side. She would be as He was, and she had only the right to stand behind Him weeping. Faith had brought her to His feet, a penitent with a troubled soul, and she heard the words, *Go in peace*. To-day we can still come to Him with our confessions, and He has given His servants a commission to say, *Go in peace, for the Lord hath put away thy sins*.

X

THE WOMAN WITH AN ISSUE OF BLOOD

JAIRUS was an important person, and he was in a great hurry. His little daughter was at the point of death, and his only hope was in getting the great Healer to her in time. How he must have raged at the great throng in the narrow street which made progress so slow; how hard it must have been for him to be patient while Our Lord dealt with another case of suffering by the way, and stopped to examine the matter. Imagine his bitterness when the servant met him with the news that he was too late—*Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.* And yet the poor old woman and rich man's little daughter were equally dear to Our Lord; all was to end well. There was no trouble He would not undertake, and He never ultimately disappoints anyone. He is the

Saviour on this side and the other side of death.

I want you first of all to concentrate on the poor woman. She had been ill for twelve years, and she had been reduced to poverty by long doctors' bills. St. Luke, the physician, admits this, but he omits what St. Mark tells us—that she had suffered many things of the physicians and only grown worse. Medical treatment in those days was often both barbarous and disgusting.

It was, perhaps, because she had nothing to give that she came behind Our Lord; it was also, perhaps, because she was ritually unclean, that she hoped she could touch the Rabbi without being noted. She believed at any rate in His healing power, and she touched only a tassel of His talith. The healing was immediate, and the Lord did not publicly condemn her somewhat superstitious faith, neither did He tell her that spiritual grace could not be communicated through material channels. Our Lord never said anything silly.

Our Lord, however, always cared for the spiritual condition of those whom He healed. The woman herself would have been ultimately ashamed if she had, as it were, stolen from Him a benefit and made no acknowledgment. Directly after the furtive touch she had shrunk back into the crowd, but Jesus stopped to ask, *Who touched Me?*

It was not that He wanted information, for it must have been His searching glance which convinced the woman that she was not hid. His object was to bring the woman to confession. To St. Peter the question seemed absurd in the jostling crowd, but Our Lord's sensitiveness could distinguish between chance contact and purposive touch. Besides, He said, *Virtue is gone out of Me.* His sacred Humanity was in itself a source of health, apart from the exercise of His will.

And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before Him, she declared unto Him before

all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately.

Why did she tremble so, and fall at His feet? Was she afraid that Our Lord would resent her act? Was she afraid of the crowd and unwilling that they should know her disease? Perhaps, but probably she was most of all afraid because she had come in touch with a supernatural power. In consequence she was well, but she trembled. It is quite likely that she had said again and again to herself, "A touch can do me no good. It is silly to think it could." And yet she had the impulse which made her try, and she tried secretly so that if she failed no one would ever know. Now that she was well she knew that she had yielded to a spirit's guidance, and had received help from a power she could not understand. Was she to live the rest of her life in dread of occult powers until she became a prey to superstitious delusions?

Our Lord saved her from danger when

He called her to Himself and made her confess what she had done. He called her *Daughter*, and made her understand the personal nature of the act. There was nothing to be afraid of. *She could be of good comfort*. It was her own faith which made it possible for her to be cured. The touching of Him was not magic; it was an expression of faith. She could go in peace, conscious that He knew all and wished her well.

From this story, as from many others, we may learn that the Lord Jesus cares for our bodies as well as for our souls. He is the Saviour of both; and He fully recognizes how body and soul act and react on one another. It is through the senses of touch, sight, hearing, taste, and smell that we are capable of receiving His grace; and it was because of the perfect health and holiness of His body that healing virtue went out of Him.

Next we learn the importance of Faith and note that there are many degrees of

this virtue, but the end of Faith is a living relationship with Our Lord. It may begin in an almost sceptical approach. Can we know Him? Can He really help? It may lead us to a secret approach while we are afraid of the crowd and what they will say. It may be a superstitious faith when we don't want Him, but only something from Him. It may lead us trembling to His feet and help us to confess Him before men. It will be confirmed when He recognizes us as His sons and daughters, and in the fulness of faith we shall find peace of mind.

Lastly, He is always ready to help us, but He will not always do so in the way we should have chosen. We so often want Him to help, but do not want to commit ourselves. He has, however, set His face against secret disciples. He is always calling us to come out into the open and confess Him before men. He does not reproach us for being timid or diffident. On the other hand, He does encourage us, saying, "Be of good comfort." Before

all things He does not wish us to be afraid of Him. He became Man that we might not shrink in terror from Godhead. He still speaks from our altars and in our hearts, *It is I, be not afraid.*

XI

JAIRUS' DAUGHTER

JAIRUS was the Ruler of a Synagogue in Capernaum—that is, he presided at its Sabbath meetings, looked after its affairs, its charities, and its school. He would be a man of some consequence in the town, with a position to maintain and a reputation to guard. Rulers of synagogues, like other public officials, whatever they call themselves, are natural conservatives. Jairus, we may in consequence imagine, was very doubtful about the teaching of Jesus, and very unwilling to compromise himself. Yet anxiety brought him to Our Lord. His little daughter was ill, was dying, all remedies had been unavailing; and then, with a faith born of despair, he hurried to the Master about whom the unlettered multitude told such tales.

Our Lord was quite ready to come, but

the narrow streets were packed with people, and progress was very slow. Jairus, notwithstanding his agony of suspense, was too much on his dignity to implore haste. Then Our Lord stopped to deal with the woman who had an issue of blood, leaving Jairus to chafe at the delay. Then friends from his house arrive with the dreaded news: *Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Master any further?* Perhaps under the Oriental politeness there was a veiled sarcasm. They meant: "The ruler's request was urgent, but you have not hurried yourself. We thought you were full of compassion, but you evidently prefer to dally with an applauding crowd. People like us will not trouble you again."

If such was their meaning, Our Lord did not answer them. He spoke no word of condolence, and He offered no excuse. He turned to the father and said, *Be not afraid: only believe.* He was a strong man sustaining a weak one. His words ring like a command. They have an assurance, due to His complete faith in

Himself and His power. We need not doubt that they inspired faith in the stricken father.

How masterful He could be on an occasion like this! *He suffered no man to follow Him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.* The jostling, eager crowd fell back at His command, and the way was suddenly clear before Him. He did not intend that there should be anything so unseemly as a mob of sightseers outside the house of mourning. But on reaching Jairus' house He found nothing but tumult, weeping and wailing—a crowd giving way to uncontrolled emotions. He was a very stern Saviour Who entered that house and said, *Why make ye this ado, and weep? The damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.*

They laughed Him to scorn. They had no doubt about the child's death, and were glad to show their contempt for the much vaunted Healer, who had come too late; but *He put them all out*, and they had to go. The strong Man had come Who

could make others obey. Jairus might be the Ruler of a Synagogue, but in his own house and in the death chamber of his daughter authority had passed to another, to One Who knew what He could do and knew His own mind. He was thinking of the child. He was going to bring her back to life, but He did not intend that she should be frightened by awaking in the midst of a crowd full of unrestrained emotions, and all the hideous accompaniments of Oriental grief.

He took the parents with Him into the death chamber. He approached the bed. He took the child's hand in His. He said, *Little girl, I say unto thee, Arise.* Everything was so simple, all was quiet; but in obedience to His words she got up and began to walk. She was alive and well again; and her parents stood there dumbfounded, *astonished with a great astonishment.*

They are roused from their stupor to hear again His words of command. *He charged them straitly that no man should*

know it, and He commanded that something should be given her to eat.

He was thinking all the time, not of Himself or His fame, but of the little girl who was twelve years old. How bad it would be for her that she should become an object of public curiosity, that people should want to see her and ask her questions, that she should come to think of herself as an exceptional being, the heroine of a miracle. She did not need public attention, but her parents were in such a state of astonishment that they were likely to forget her immediate requirements. The child, who had died of weakness and was now restored to life and health, wanted food, and probably had the appetite of one convalescent. Nothing was too small for the Saviour's care. He loved children and knew their wants. After one of His greatest miracles, He brings the parents back to everyday life.

XII

THE SYROPHENICIAN WOMAN

We have seen that faith is efficacious for the healing of the body in the case of the woman with the issue of blood; we have seen that faith is efficacious for the healing of the soul, and conditioned the forgiveness of the woman who was a sinner. We have now to see the value our faith may have for others and learn from the Syrophenician woman.

The story, it seems to me, is often misunderstood. Perhaps I am wrong, but this is how I interpret it to myself.

Our Lord had retired from Galilee into the country of Tyre and Sidon. He had escaped from the uncertain tyranny of Herod and the pronounced opposition of the Jews, who had been sent down from Jerusalem to enquire into His teaching. He had escaped also from the misguided enthusiasm of his Galilean disciples who

wished to make Him a king. He was seeking a retired spot, across the frontier in heathen territory, in order that He might train and instruct the Twelve. But His fame had gone before Him and He could not be hid. As soon as He went out of the house, there was a native crying after Him: *Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David ; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.* Who was she, so to acclaim Him as Son of David ? She was a Syrophenician, and as such outside the promises made to David and his seed. Our Lord walked on and did not seem to hear her cries, but she followed and did not cease. She was a mother and in great distress. For the sake of her little daughter what would she not do ? The wonder-working Son of David should stop and hear.

The disciples were irritated by her persistence. They said: *Send her away, for she crieth after us.* What they meant was: For goodness sake, give her what she wants and let us be rid of her ! It is in that selfish spirit that many gifts have been

bestowed on beggars at all times, but it was not in that spirit that Our Lord showed mercy. He stopped and looked at His disciples. Then He said: "*I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.* Don't you know that is My mission? Don't you know I sent you out with the command: 'Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans'? If I am to satisfy this woman you must give Me some better reason than, *She crieth after us.* What is it?" And the disciples, who hated foreigners, had none to give.

But by stopping He had allowed the woman to come up, and, breathless as she was, she fell at His feet saying, *Lord, help me.* Now I imagine Our Lord looked down on her with a smile. If Jews hated foreigners, Syrophenicians hated Jews. They called one another "dogs" and other insulting names. Our Lord, smiling, reminded her of this, when He said ever so gently: *It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs.* But He did not

say *dogs*; in the Greek it is diminutive. What He said was *doggies*. And the woman looked up in His face and met the wonder of His smile. She was no longer afraid of Jesus, she no longer thought of Him as a mysterious foreigner—the Son of David. He had conjured up in her mind not the scavenger dogs who suggested abusive epithets, but the little domestic pets of a household. She understood Him and returned His smile as she said: "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table!" Then the Lord praised her. He addressed her with a title of respect—O woman! *O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.* She understood Him when the disciples had failed to do so. As Dr. Plummer says: "With doglike perseverance, she had excelled even the children in trust, and assuredly she might receive what the children would never miss."

It was true that Our Lord's first mission

was to His own people. He came to them as *the Son of David*, but it is not as Son of David that He makes His great appeal to the hearts of us Gentiles. To us, as to the Syrophenician woman, there is something unreal in such an address. It was quite true that out of Judaism was to grow the Christian Church, but the Apostles had to learn the great lesson—they had been elected, not for their own sakes, but that they might be serviceable to others. It was not for them to send people away because they interfered with their religious instruction, or because they were troublesome, or because they were heathen or unorthodox and did not belong to the House of Israel. They had to learn also that good works without charity are nothing worth, that the human factor always counts, that it is even worth while to be kind both to dogs and doggies, or those whom we think of as such.

Supposing Our Lord had responded at once to the Syrophenician woman and formally granted her request, she would

have gone away marvelling at the power of the Foreigner, but she would not have loved Him. She would have thought of Him merely as a Great Magician, and magic has nothing to do with religion. Religion is a matter of personal relationships. Our Lord did not treat her merely as a woman, but as a woman who had a sense of humour, and He appealed to it. She looked up into His face and saw a smile; she knew she was in contact with One Who had a heart, Who loved her and loved her little daughter, Who could rally her about her treatment of a pet doggie. So she went away rejoicing in His goodness and knowing somewhat of the mystery of the Incarnation—God has become very near, that all may bring to Him their troubles and not be afraid.

The disciples, and ourselves also, may learn from this incident the value of continued intercession. We are not to look on prayer as a formality or an incantation. We have not to utter a formula and then receive precisely what we want. Our Lord

wants us to follow after Him, and not to be content with crying at a distance. We must wish for real communion with Him and not be dismayed because, for sinners like ourselves, the way of approach seems hard and long. To persevere in intercession we have to love as that Syrophenician loved her child. We must also face the facts and be humble. We are not saints, we have no right to be heard. It is not because we have a claim on God that we go to Him with our petitions. It is because we trust in His love and mercy and believe that He not only has power but also can sympathize.

Lastly, such intercession is availing. That is the clear teaching of the story. There are people who think it may help if they pray for themselves, but cannot see how their prayers can affect others. There are people also who believe that we may help others spiritually by praying for them, but cannot believe that prayer can have any effect in the material sphere. But the Syrophenician prayed and was heard.

The Evangelist says: *Her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*

We are all members one of another, and each member ministers to the whole body. We are material as well as spiritual, and none can determine the relations of spirit to matter. The God Who made us, He knows. And Jesus, He is God, acts. By His action He has proved to us that prayer for others, and even for others' material welfare, may be rewarded and avail.

XIII

MARTHA AND MARY

THIS is the story of two good women. St. John tells us that "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus," and He stayed with them in their house at Bethany when He came to Jerusalem. They were probably rich people, and may have had another house in Galilee; and we gather from St. Luke that it was in Galilee that this incident occurred.

Our Lord arrived at their house, and Martha was delighted to entertain Him. He may have been unexpected, but this only stimulated her the more to prove how good a housewife she was. Martha liked taking trouble. Mary, her sister, was also delighted that He had come. She could never hear enough of His teaching. She was never so happy as when she sat, like a disciple, at His feet.

But Martha, hurrying backwards and forwards, was irritated by her sister sitting still. She was perhaps more irritated because Our Lord was attending to her sister, and did not seem to mark the exertions she was making on His behalf. It was really just a little rude when she interrupted Him by saying, "Dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me!" The complaint, as it was addressed to Our Lord, was a complaint of Him as well as Mary; and I don't think she really wanted Mary's help, for she was one of those active, restless women who prefer to do everything themselves. The truth was, though she did not know it, that she was jealous of the way in which Mary was monopolizing their Guest.

And Our Lord understood her so well. It was so natural that she should feel like that. I think there was a smile on His face, and a playful tone in His voice as He said, "O Martha! Martha!" Then He went on so gently, "Thou art flustered

about many things, but one thing is needful." We do get flustered when we are trying to do more than one thing at the same time, and *flustered*, I think, exactly represents the Greek word used by St. Luke. "Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her." You must leave her alone.

He loved both the sisters, and He was not there to reprove either of them. He knows that Martha's momentary temper is due to the heat, her being tired and over-anxious. He knows also that Mary needs protection. She was probably only too sensitive to reproach. What exquisite tact Our Lord showed in smoothing over a disagreeable moment, and yet His words, which are true, have lessons and applications for all time.

First, and most obvious, we ought to believe that a guest desires our society more than to see our clothes, or to marvel at the excellence of our dinner. Very often a guest is kept waiting while his hostess adorns herself, or he is treated

with such elaborate ceremony that he is made to feel himself a nuisance. Mary, who came to the Visitor and sat at His feet, had better manners than Martha, although Martha's solicitude for His entertainment came from an equally kind heart.

But Holy Scripture has something more to teach us than good manners. The simplest words and acts of Our Blessed Lord, because they are perfect and perfectly true, are also of universal application. They are equally true about our social relations and our relations with God, about the affairs of this life and the secrets of our souls. Let us think for a moment of our religious life, remembering it was as a religious teacher that Martha served Our Lord and Mary listened to Him.

When we go to church to-day it is probable that we hear a sermon, more or less eloquent, upon *service*. Some clergy seem to preach of nothing else; and many of their hearers quite wrongly get into

their heads that the more they run about, the more committees they serve on, the more good works they undertake, the better they are. They get like Martha, "flustered," and that is bad for their tempers. Moreover, when people get "flustered," they cease to do good work. Now, we may take it for granted that when we find ourselves flustered we are attempting too much, and must give something up in order to do other things better. We may also learn that the best work is not done on a rush. The best work generally means that someone has sat down quietly and thought it out. We are tempted to glory in being, oh! so busy and pressed; but the really efficient people are never in a hurry.

Secondly, in our work for the Master we are sometimes tempted to forget Him. We are so anxious about our work, so interested in it, that we begin to forget that it is being done for Him at all; and then, when things go wrong, we go to Him with complaints. "Why have you not

helped me or given me success? Why have you left me to work alone? Why don't other good people take an interest in my work?" In fact, we are just like Martha; but Our Lord is there all the time, and He is smiling at us. He only wants us to sit down and learn of Him. If we will do that, our work will be of a better quality. We must learn to meditate, and then go about conscious of His presence, listening for His inspiration in our hearts.

Thirdly, we are sometimes tempted to think our works to be meritorious. We are self-satisfied; but we cannot save ourselves. We do not help Him so much by our works as He helps us by His grace; and it is only through His grace that our works will be perfected. We must first sit at His feet as disciples like Mary, and then we may learn to do His will in His Spirit. That is the good part which He asks us to choose. There are many ways of life, many callings, much work to be done of every kind, but they will all come to an end and pass away.

There is only one thing that is needful—that we should know Jesus, be with Jesus. He never changes, but is eternally the same. He is our God, and cannot be taken away from us.

Do not mistake me; I am not disparaging good works. I am very fond of Martha, and very happy to think that Jesus loved her. But good women have their special temptations; and this story is a warning to good women that they should watch, pray, and beware. There are lazy good women also, who are tempted to think that they are like Mary, when they are not, because they like going to church, beautiful vestments, incense, and music, but neglect their household duties or any consideration for their servants and relations. If they were really sitting at the feet of Jesus they would not behave like that. For it is Our Lord who has given us these duties, and we dare not come into His presence knowing that they are unperformed. The ardent, loving soul of Mary of Bethany would not have been so

happy in Our Lord's presence had she been conscious all the time that Martha had real need of her assistance. The point is, Martha hadn't: she was just flustered.

XIV

THE BLESSING OF CHILDREN

THE Pharisees had come to discover Our Lord's position as regards divorce, about which Judaism was much divided. Our Lord had proclaimed the indissoluble character of marriage, saying, *What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.* In the house afterwards the disciples questioned Him on the subject, and pointed out that under so strict a rule it would be better to remain single. Our Lord, according to St. Matthew, admitted of a celibate vocation; according to St. Mark, He reiterated His teaching, adding that the marriage of divorced persons was adulterous. While they were talking, women, quite unconscious of the argument, were bringing their children to Jesus, and providing an excellent answer to the questioning disciples. It is for the children's sakes that

homes must be hallowed and the married remain at one.

We need not suppose that the children were all of them babies. The Greek word has no such limitation, and as Our Lord passed through all the stages of immaturity, it is better to think of His words as applicable to children from babyhood up to ten. We need not think of them as very numerous, but, on the other hand, there must have been several mothers. One or two lurking about the door in the hope that Jesus would come out and touch their children would not have been sufficient to excite the disciples. The mothers had brought their children in the hope that Our Lord would touch them. We cannot understand why; perhaps they hardly understood themselves. They believed in His goodness, they believed that life and health went forth from Him, they wanted Him to see their little ones, they wanted their little ones to see Him.

But the disciples went out to rebuke them. They were, no doubt, irritated

that what they regarded as important teaching should be interrupted by children. No doubt also they excused themselves by saying that they were protecting their Master from being bothered by silly women. Our Lord was a great Teacher, and they found in His teaching many hard sayings. What could children understand, and how could they benefit ?

But Our Lord was angry. He so very rarely was angry that the fact is most significant. He was angry because He loved children and wanted them to come to Him. He was angry because the disciples were being rude to poor women who, if they had erred at all, had erred out of love and enthusiasm for Him. He was, perhaps, also angry because His disciples had altogether misconceived the nature of grace. Grace is God's free gift, and it does not depend on the cleverness or the goodness of those who receive it. So we may believe that He would be angry to-day with those who imagine that spiritual growth is only due to a psychological

process, who deny that through material means spiritual power may be transmitted, who are so intent on providing a religion for educated men that they are contemptuous about the needs of the simple and the poor. To such He says now as He said then: *Suffer the little children to come unto Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*

It was their innocence that made them so lovable, it was their potentialities which made them so interesting, but it was their receptiveness that made them so able to enter the kingdom of heaven. They had no past which made them shrink from the Saviour, no prejudices to prevent their understanding Him, no pride and self-will which would make them reject His aid. Our Lord turned to those standing by, to the mothers in their solicitude, and to the disciples with their conscious feeling of superiority, and said—*Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.*

Then the children came to Him one by one, and He put His arms about each and lifted each one up. He put His hands on the head of each and gave to each His blessing. This was more than the mothers had hoped for, more than the disciples could understand; but on that day the value of child life was established, and the wonder of God's grace was shown not to be restricted to those who could understand.

"These bothering women, these intrusive children, what a nuisance they are!" thought the disciples. "What a waste of time when the Master has so much to say, and we are so anxious to learn!" Yes, such thoughts were perhaps quite natural, but let our imagination stray! Let us think how seventy years later an old man would gather the children about his knees and tell to them the tale. "I cannot remember, I was too little, but my mother has told me again and again. This same Jesus Whom we worship took me up in His arms and embraced me, before He

gave me His blessing. All these years since, through scourgings, imprisonments, sorrow and suffering, His blessing has followed me. Look at me and remember, and tell your grandchildren, 'I have seen a man who has been in the arms of God.'"

XV

THE RAISING OF LAZARUS

LAZARUS lay in the grave. His sisters had sent for Our Lord during their brother's illness; they had waited so impatiently for His coming; they had believed so fervently in His healing power. But Our Lord had delayed to answer their message, and Lazarus had died. Their prayers had not been answered, and they were very sad, but Jesus loved Martha and her sister Mary, and it was for their sakes that He tarried—it was for the sake of the Apostles and for our sakes also.

For four days Lazarus had lain in the grave. Mary, the gentle sister, was still weeping in the desolate house, while Martha, the active sister, was roaming hither and thither, wanting to do something and not knowing what to do. Friends had come from Jerusalem to comfort Mary;

but Martha could not abide their sympathy; she wanted to get away from them and be alone.

It was because she was outside that she first heard the news of Our Lord's approach. Although it seemed useless, someone was still on the look-out for Him. A week ago how great would have been the joy! But Martha, hastening to meet Him, has no thought of reproaching Him for His delay. She loves and believes sufficiently not to doubt His willingness to help. She is only full of the sad mischance. *Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.* And as she says the words, looking on the loving face of the Saviour, a fantastic hope flickers through her mind, *I know that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee.* It is to this sudden impulsive thought that Our Lord immediately replies with the promise, *Thy brother shall rise again.* But Martha is a woman of common sense. She distrusts the impulses of faith. She withdraws at once to her established creed,

and says, " I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day," for it is so much easier to believe in a wonderful far-off event than in the possibility of a present miracle. Our Lord, however, goes on, *I am the Resurrection and the Life: he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?* This is more than Martha's mind can grasp. It is a new truth, and she feels bewildered. But she is ready to accept what she does not understand because she believes in Him. She falls back on the confession made before by St. Peter: *I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, Who should come into the world.*

Puzzled and excited she seeks her sister. She recognizes the fact that she has a greater power of spiritual apprehension. Usually Mary depended on her, but now she has need of Mary. She goes to her, and whispers in her ear that the Master has come. The whisper is in

itself characteristic, for she does not want the presence of sympathetic but intrusive friends. It is characteristic of the friends also that they follow Mary, for the sympathetic cannot stay away even when they know not how to help; and it is by following the way of love that they, too, come into the presence of the Master, although they cannot help thinking that He ought to have come before.

And Mary, coming to Our Lord, speaks just as her sister, *Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.* It is the sad refrain that they had said over and over to one another during the last four days—Oh, why was He not here? Oh, that He had been! But Mary wants no enlightenment, she is weeping; and Our Lord does not instruct or argue with her, He also weeps.

So they come to the grave of Lazarus. It is his death that has brought them all so close together—the death of one relation so often reunites a family by the grave. But this grave is to be a door of hope, and

Our Lord commands them: *Take ye away the stone*. It is done, in spite of the common-sense protest of Martha, for common sense has so little to do with the ultimate facts of life and death; and common sense cannot anticipate the glory of God.

Our Lord prays. If He is acting as the Son of Man, His human Will is always at one with His divine Will. No Person of the Blessed Trinity ever acts alone. It is through correspondence with the Father that His miracles are performed. They are the works which His Father has given Him to do.

Then He cries with a loud voice, *Lazarus, come forth*; and the dead man comes forth, bound in his grave clothes. Our Lord says, *Loose him and let him go*. Martha now knows in part how Our Lord is the Resurrection and the Life. He has Life in Himself, and can communicate it to another.

But surely, as we read of Our Lord saying *I am the Resurrection and the Life*, it

should mean much more to us than it meant to Martha on that day of her great surprise. She had had to wait until the Lord was visibly with her; He had come to her in the midst of sorrow and despair. Lazarus had only been restored to his previous existence, and that only for a time. It was an exceptional manifestation of power, but there was no reason to suppose it would ever be repeated; it was far from certain that its repetition would be desirable. We may be sure that few departed Saints would wish to come back. Lazarus had come back that he might share with his sisters in a greater sorrow, the Crucifixion of Our Lord, and that he might know of a better Resurrection, when on the third day Our Lord rose from the dead.

The Resurrection of Our Lord was different. He came back that we might be assured of His continuous life, and that in the other world He was the same Jesus, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." But if He would assure us of the permanence of His humanity, He opens out

before us a prospect of what humanity may attain to. His new life was progressive, to be lived under new conditions. He passed from the Cross of Calvary to the throne in heaven.

Our Lord says, "I am the Resurrection"; "I am the Life." It is not in something that is going to happen that we find this to be true. It is a present fact, and in union and communion with Him we verify His statement: "I have come that ye may have life, and have it more abundantly."

We, indeed, have not come forth from a sealed grave like Lazarus, but we were buried with our Lord in baptism; we are already possessed of the new life, and should act in accordance with our power. At the Font we were given back to our friends, as Lazarus was given back to Martha and Mary, that they may help us, and we them, on our way to the celestial city. We may be sure that Lazarus did not forget Jesus, because he was once more with his sisters; and we must not allow

our human relations to interfere with His claims. Their care and nursing could not save Lazarus, and all that this world offers cannot save us from death. And what is death? It is the separation of soul and body. And what is life? It is union with the Life of the Life-Giver. We only fear death because it means a separation from persons and things to which we are accustomed, although we know that they are also transitory, and the glory of this world passes away. But who can separate us from the love of Christ? No one can do that, and so, if we love Him, death has no longer any power over us. In Him is life, and we share His life. He is also the Resurrection, and we need not expect an incomplete immortality. We believe in the ultimate resurrection of the body, both for ourselves and for our friends; we believe in the fulness of life, where parting and separation will be no more.

XVI

ZEBEDEE'S CHILDREN

It was on the last journey to Jerusalem, it was just after Our Lord had explicitly foretold His sufferings and death, that Salome and her two sons came to Him, and Salome asked for her two sons the chief places in His kingdom. Had they not heard His prediction? Yes, it had been dinned into their ears. Did they not believe Him? Yes, but like other people since, they did not think His words were to be taken literally when they conflicted with their own opinions and hopes. Anyhow, they may have argued, it is just the time, when the Master seems most discouraged and discouraging, to show our own faith and loyalty. We refuse to be daunted, but still believe in the Twelve Thrones and that we shall judge the Twelve Tribes of Israel.

Our Lord's words were to be taken literally, that we know: but the hopes of James and John were not to be falsified, that we know also. The kingdom was established, it was built on the Apostles, it is still extending throughout the world, it will never be overthrown. Men's aspirations can generally be realized, but not always at once, and rarely in an expected way.

James and John believed in the kingdom, and were ready to devote themselves to its interests, but they wanted to safeguard their own position. They loved Our Lord, and dreamed of the splendid things they would do for Him. They knew that He loved them, and were jealous of His favour. They had been with Him on the Mount of Transfiguration, and yet they had fears that they might be supplanted in His service. They were probably very young, and other disciples were much older and so might be preferred.

But they were Our Lord's cousins, and this fact appealed especially to their mother.

It is women who stay at home who think most of family relationships and the claims of blood. To her it seemed only right that her sons should have the pre-eminence. "You are akin to Mary's Son, and the other disciples, however worthy, can make no such claim."

For Salome the time had come. It was evident that a crisis was approaching and the times were perilous. She was prepared to devote her sons to Our Lord's cause, but she did not want them to be disappointed in the days of His success. As a practical woman she wanted to know where they stood; as a loving mother she thought first of their advancement.

So she brings her sons to the Lord, but in His presence they all falter. By His look He asks why they have come, and they find it difficult to answer. They find it difficult to come to the point. They say, *We would that Thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we desire.* Even Salome has to be encouraged before she asks: *Grant that these, my two sons, may sit one on Thy*

right hand and the other on the left, in Thy kingdom. Note that in saying, "Grant that these, my two sons," she hints that, because they are *my* sons, they have a claim. Hers is the family point of view; the welfare of the kingdom is beyond her horizon. Do we blame her? Our Lord did not blame her. He loves all mothers who desire that their children should be near to Himself, though He may sometimes smile when *they know not what they ask.* It is not their love that is wrong, but the limitation of their vision. It is not the mothers' ambition, but the sons' capacity which is and should be the determining factor, so Our Lord turns to the young men and asks: *Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?* Those who would share His throne must reach it by His Way, and that is the way of the Cross.

The ardent young men do not doubt their power. The tempestuous young men who would have called down fire from

heaven do not flinch from danger or faint. They are sure of themselves, sure of their cause, full of love and enthusiasm. We may be sure that Jesus loved them, as they did not pause to count the cost, but answered at once, *We are able*. He accepted their assurance without question. He associated them with Him in His Passion. They should drink of His cup, and share His baptism, *but to sit on My right hand and My left is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father*. It should suffice them that they were called to share His lot and suffer for His sake. Beyond that they had His promise that all His servants should have their reward. But who should be greatest or who least in His kingdom could only be known to the Father, outside time, Who knows all things from the beginning to the end, judges all, and is just.

Of course the other disciples heard of the request that had been made, and equally of course they were offended. It

was not because of their own humility that they condemned the presumption of James and John; it was because each preferred his own claims and coveted the highest place. So Our Lord dealt with the general question and the difference between His kingdom and an earthly monarchy. The ordinary prince was oppressive enough, his favourite more oppressive still; but the only way to authority in His kingdom was through willingness to serve. Not only James and John, but the other disciples also, received correction when He said, *Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your slave; even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.*

XVII

WOMAN, BEHOLD THY SON

Our Lord was dying on the Cross. Darkness was coming on, and the crowd, which had mocked Him, scattered. None remained but the soldiers on duty, the Mother who bore Him, and the disciple whom He loved. These two were broken-hearted, but they could not help; it was horrible to see Him suffer, but they could not tear themselves away. The heart of Our Lady was pierced as with a sword thrust. St. John had to support her and his own despair.

Our Lord in His own awful dying agony is thinking of them. He had loved them so and would still help them, for He loved them unto the end. He addressed His Mother by a title of high respect, so inadequately translated as woman—*Woman, behold thy son*; and then turning His gaze

on the disciple, He said, *Son, behold thy Mother*. And they, because they loved Him, understood His meaning. Henceforth they were to live together. The dying Man was Love incarnate, and in dying He linked those whom He loved more closely together.

We need not be surprised that Our Lord entrusted His Mother to St. John. Probably she was the sister of Salome and St. John was her nephew. He was young, and her stepchildren may all of them have been married. Besides, the stepchildren had not hitherto believed in Our Lord, and in her desolation she would not wish to go to them. St. John had forsaken all that He might be Our Lord's disciple, and he was in consequence the one who could best console His Mother.

Looking back over the centuries, we speak of Our Lord's death as an Atonement. It was at-one-ment between God and man, it was also an atonement of men with one another. This at-one-ment Our Lord began with those whom He loved best:

He united His Mother with His disciple, and then both with Himself—He being One with the Father. It is surely worth our remembering that the Atonement begins in the circle of the family and the home, and that if we would benefit the world we should start in our immediate surroundings. There are so many people with splendid dreams for the world's betterment who neglect the little duties which lie at hand, and in talking about the love of humanity forget the intimate claims of home. It was not so with Our Lord. He was dying for the salvation of the whole world. His death was the greatest event in history, and yet upon the Cross He thought of His Mother. His saving work began with her.

We can enter a little into her sorrow, for many have lost those whom they loved in the horrors of the late war. We can enter only a little way, for none of us have loved as she did, none of us have known anyone so lovable as Jesus. Perhaps we also have found that sorrow may be purified

by sympathy. It is the sorrow that we lock up in our hearts which causes us to despair and renders our life meaningless. It is the sorrow that we share with another that ennobles us and gives life a meaning. How could St. John despair when he had the Blessed Mother to care for? How could she despair, without ingratitude to him? The holiest and most enduring relationships are those that are made in sorrow. Our festival friends come and pass—they were pleasant; but it is those with whom we have shared the dark hours that are dear. Links forged in a furnace of sorrow do not break.

But do not forget the relationship of Our Lady to St. John was made at the Cross. What bound them together was not due to mutual attraction, but to Jesus. They lived in their memories of Him. They reminded each other of all He was, of what He said, and how He looked. It was in the long communion of Our Lady and St. John that the wonderful Fourth Gospel took shape, that little facts re-

membered, talked of, brooded on, became significant. The Fourth Gospel is so full of the humanity of Jesus. It is the most intimate of our records, and it is the most complete revelation of the Word made flesh.

If Our Lord was God incarnate, this is just what we ought to expect. Those who knew Him most intimately would know best who He was, and be most clear about His Deity. Those who met Him only by the wayside, or only heard Him in His public utterances, might doubt. It was the more complete experience which compelled belief. It was two minds in sympathy and collaboration which at length framed the words in which the world could be told what they knew.

And we? What have we to learn? On the Cross Our Lord consecrated human relationships, home, and friendship. He did not mean any of us to keep ourselves to ourselves or to be saved alone. He meant us to live in certain surroundings, which He chooses for us, and He meant

us to serve Him in serving those who are His.

On the Cross also He consecrated our sorrows, and He did not mean that our losses should lead to despair. It is our duty that we should live worthy of the dead, whom we have loved, and that we should form fresh ties in their honour and for their sake; while those who have passed beyond the veil are links with another world. Partings take place that the way may be opened up to a more extended vision and to higher interests.

Lastly, on the Cross He condemned all jealousy—the jealous love that wants the beloved one all for himself and all to himself. He wants His Mother to love St. John, He wants St. John to love His Mother. In linking them together, He shows us that true love is ever expansive.

XVIII

ON EASTER MORNING

It has been long disputed in the Church if Mary Magdalene and Mary of Bethany are two women or one. I am inclined to identify them. Lazarus and his sisters were evidently rich, and she who provided the alabaster box of ointment—very precious—was likely to prepare the spices for Our Lord's burial. She who had sat at Our Lord's feet had the same disposition as the Mary who lingered about the tomb when even St. Peter and St. John had gone away. She who had watched him so eagerly, she who had kissed his feet, was she who wanted to anoint the dead body. Dazed with grief, she did not recognize who stood behind her, but supposed it was the gardener. It was so like Mary of Bethany, that in the rebound of joy in seeing Him alive she should have

wished to cling to Him; it was an instinctive action. She felt He must never again go away. Had not Lazarus been restored to her and their old life? She naturally thought that in the same way Our Lord had come forth from the grave. But Our Lord said, *Touch Me not*, for Mary had to learn the way of a more spiritual union with Himself. In other circumstances the disciples were told, *Handle Me and see*; *for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see Me to have*; for they needed to be convinced of His Bodily Resurrection. Mary had been given to contemplation; she is now told to act. *Go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to My Father, and your Father, to My God, and your God.*

It is worth remarking that the two greatest announcements ever made in the world were made to women. The first was when the Archangel Gabriel bowed before Our Lady and told her that she should have a Son; and the second was on Easter morning when the Saviour announced, not His Resurrection, which

was apparent, but His Ascension to the throne of God.

So long as Our Lord remained on earth He was subject to the limitations of time and space. He had to be sent for and might not arrive in time, as Mary knew full well. He was now with this person, now with that. It was often difficult to come near Him through the press. But if He were to be the Saviour of the world, it was necessary that He should transcend these limitations, should rise to such a position that all men everywhere might have access to Him.

His Resurrection was not an end in itself. It was a stage in the glorification of His manhood. Men needed to be convinced that that manhood was permanent, that in the higher life He was indeed the same Jesus, *the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.* They needed to be assured that the true risen life was complete, and altogether different from the pagan dream of an immortality for the soul. He was not a ghost, neither had He been absorbed

into the infinite. He had not come down to earth to be a man and then returned to Heaven to be God once more. He is God from everlasting. He is also man for evermore. It is no unimagined abstraction, but the Son of Mary, Who sits on the throne of Deity, and will yet come to judge the world.

Moreover, in His exaltation He is not unmindful of His past. He appears to the woman who had loved Him with such devotion. He sends her to the disciples whom He had taught. When they have been prepared, He will appear to them also. He will teach them the things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven. He will commission them to carry on His work and at the same time He will show His sympathy with their everyday needs. He will come to them, after they have failed in fishing, to ask: "Children, have ye any meat?" He will be thoughtful in providing breakfast for tired men.

And yet all through the great Forty Days He is accustoming His disciples to

enter into a new relationship. He appears and disappears at will. He is close to them when they do not see Him, and hears the doubts of Thomas. He walks unrecognized on the way to Emmaus. His Body is henceforth to be discerned in the breaking of bread.

At the end of the Forty Days, on Mount Olivet, the disciples saw Him, in the act of blessing, go off the earth. They gazed after Him until a cloud received Him out of their sight. Perhaps even then they thought chiefly of the marvel and did not understand. It was not until Pentecost that they grasped the significance of the acted parable, and entered into the meaning of the message which they had received from Mary—*I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; to My God, and your God.*

Let us try to sum up what the message meant.

The Lord was risen again, but He still cared for His disciples. He was ascending to the throne of God, but He was not ashamed to call them brethren.

He said, *I ascend*, which means "I am now ascending," and not "I am about to ascend." This is clear in the Greek. Although the disciples described truthfully what they saw on Ascension Day, we have to remember that God is everywhere, and the truth behind the fact is the exaltation of Our Lord's manhood.

Our Lord makes a distinction between "My Father" and "your Father." For He is God the Son, of one nature and substance with the Father, and we are only God's children by grace. Yet Our Lord speaks of the Father as "My God," just as He cried, "My God, My God," upon the Cross, because for our sakes He had become man, and was inferior to the Father as touching His manhood.

Believing His message, we can say our prayers unperplexed. We no longer need shrink from a mysterious and infinite Being, whom no man hath seen and no man can imagine. We say our prayers through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. He has passed

into the heavens to repeat our prayers and make intercession for us.

The Son of Man has ascended into heaven; manhood can therefore enter into the holy place. He has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. He is not the only one. He is the firstfruits of the dead, and the completeness of His victory is shown in His bringing many sons and daughters unto glory. But they must follow Him, trust Him, and obey Him. He says: *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life; no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.*

But we must go His way. Mary, when she clung to His feet as if to detain Him, was thinking first of herself. He was passing on to His Father's home. She was content to know that He was alive again. He sent her to proclaim the truth to His brethren. Life always means movement and activity, and true life is a progress. Mary would have rested in the present; He called her to contemplate the future—*I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; to My God, and your God.*

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
BILLING AND SONS, LIMITED
GUILDFORD AND ESHER

Date Due

Thesis			
Thesis			

LIBRARY RULES

1. **No book may be tak... without being** Borrowers are ... age done to th... possession and ... good all losses.
2. (a) **Reserve Books** may be borrowed for a period of two hours. In case no call has been made in the interval, books may be renewed for a second two hours. (Where there is only one copy, book must be used in the library.)

   (b) Reserve books taken at 10 p. m. Mondays to Fridays are due at 9 a. m. the next morning. A reserve book taken from the library at 12 m. Saturday is due at 9 a. m. the following Monday.
3. Books not on reserve may be drawn from the library for two weeks and may be renewed once for the same period, except one-day books.
4. A fine of two cents a day will be charged on each book which is not returned according to the above rule.
5. **MAGAZINES ARE NOT** to be taken from the library without the special permission of the librarian.

GTU Library
3 2400 00708 7905

LIBRARY USE ONLY

FX90
Sm5

GTU Library
2400 Ridge Road
Berkeley, CA 94709
For renewals call (510) 649-2500
All items are subject to recall

14137